

124 Bull Hill Road
Colchester, CT 06415
hollowayeducation@yahoo.com

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Dear State of Connecticut Senate and House Members,

I am writing to voice my support for **Bill SB00929-AA Expanding School Meal Programs to Provide Free School Meals to All Students**. A veteran teacher of twenty-three years and a single father to teenagers, I have seen first-hand the positive benefits of meals provided to Connecticut's children.

With renewed focus on high quality, in-person instruction following the pandemic, we must continue leading the way in education. This simple fix is not only measurable, it remains necessary. Children learn better when their nutritional needs are met. While we attempt to tackle burgeoning mental health concerns with our students, food insecurity, a major factor for too many of Connecticut's children, can be remedied with this bill. It is the first step in approaching educational issues.

As a working-class taxpayer, I value the past years' implementation of meals for our kids. Surrounding New England states as well as New York and New Jersey have already voted their meal programs through. Why have we waited this long? Of all the programs we are or may be taxed on, I wholeheartedly support this difference-maker. Believe me, in over two decades as an education professional, I have witnessed the waste of public funds devoted to useless, "shiny object" initiatives that promised to raise test scores and achievement—to no avail. Providing nutritional security for all our students has proven to improve students' performance, particularly after the Covid shutdown. This bill stands as a simple solution in solving a long-term problem; it covers economic disparity, social inequity, and student anxiety, all while creating healthier eating habits. You can't miss on this!

We parents, educators, and proud Nutmeggers will be paying very close attention to the progress of this bill. I am positive you would agree that **Bill SB00929-AA** improves the lives of your constituents and, most importantly, our Connecticut families. I look forward to your vote *for* this valuable program.

Sincerely,



Joseph Holloway
East Hampton Public School Teacher
CEA-Middlesex County Director
Life-long Connecticut Resident
Proud Father